



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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## Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve News Release

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### Great Sand Dunes Welcomes 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students through Every Kid in a Park Initiative

*New National Program Encourages Families and Classes to Visit National Parks*

Mosca, CO – Great Sand Dunes invites all 4<sup>th</sup> grade students to visit the park for free as part of the White House’s new Every Kid in a Park program. Starting September 1, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students can visit the website, [www.everykidinapark.gov](http://www.everykidinapark.gov), to complete an activity and obtain a voucher which they can then exchange for a free annual entry pass to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national park units, wildlife refuge areas, and US national forests.

The goal of the Every Kid in a Park program is to connect 4<sup>th</sup> graders with the great outdoors and inspire them to become future environmental stewards, ready to preserve and protect national park units and other public lands for years to come. The program is an important part of the National Park Service’s centennial celebration in 2016, which encourages everyone to *Find Your Park*.

Great Sand Dunes Superintendent Lisa Carrico is thrilled to be one of over 400 park units participating in this initiative as part of the National Park Service centennial celebration. “Great Sand Dunes is a great place for families and we’re offering a special invitation to Valley fourth graders and their families to come and discover everything that the park and preserve have to offer—Ranger programs, hiking, sand sledding, fishing, camping, star gazing— to name just a few.” Superintendent Carrico goes on to say that “While we want everyone to visit the park and preserve, we encourage them to visit other national park units and other public lands within the San Luis Valley.”

To receive their free pass for national parks, fourth graders must visit the Every Kid in a Park website at [www.everykidinapark.gov](http://www.everykidinapark.gov) and play a game to access their special Every Kid in a Park voucher. Fourth graders and their families can then exchange the voucher for a pass for free entry to national

parks and other federal public lands and waters across the country from September 1st, 2015 through August 31, 2016. The website also includes fun and engaging learning activities aligned to educational standards, trip planning tools, safety and packing tips and other important and helpful information for educators and parents. It is very important for fourth-graders to download their voucher before visiting their national park unit in order to exchange it for their free access pass when they visit a national park unit. Without the voucher, they will not be able to obtain their free pass.

Every year Great Sand Dunes offers a variety of activities that kids of all ages and their families can enjoy, including a junior ranger activity book or attending a fun, interactive ranger program during the summer season. In 2016, as part of the National Park Service's centennial celebration, Great Sand Dunes will focus on San Luis Valley fourth graders and develop special educational programs for San Luis Valley fourth-grade teachers and homeschool parents during the months of April and early May for their fourth-grade students. Teachers and homeschool parents are encouraged to reserve a program in advance to guarantee a spot. Beginning January 2016, teachers can contact the park at 719-378-6395 to schedule a program. In addition, Great Sand Dunes is planning a special *Every Kid in a Park* celebration before the end of the school year, during the month of May, to honor 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in the San Luis Valley. For more information on spring educational program offerings and the special *Every Kid in a Park* event in May, visit the park website at [www.nps.gov/grsa](http://www.nps.gov/grsa) or call the Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services at 719-378-6341.

Every Kid in a Park is an administrative-wide effort, launched by President Obama, and supported by eight federal agencies, including the National Park Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Education, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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